

U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/942,582
Amendment dated February 9, 2004
Reply to OA of **October 17, 2003**

REMARKS

Claims 1-7 are pending in this application. It is respectfully believed that no new matter has been added.

Applicant submitted a certified copy of the priority documents February 2, 2004. The filing dates of the priority documents are September 4, 2000 and November 2, 2000, respectively.

Claims 1-6 stand objected to for various informalities. The listing of claims submitted herewith exhibits increased spacing between words to correct the noted informalities. Thus, Applicant respectfully submits that this objection should be withdrawn.

The Examiner has objected to the disclosure for various informalities. The substitute specification submitted herewith exhibits increased spacing between words to correct the noted informalities. Thus, Applicant respectfully submits that this objection should be withdrawn.

Before turning to the cited references, a brief review of the present invention is in order. The present invention includes a locker system with a locker, an electronic lock, a control unit, and a reader, and other features. The control unit is connected to a locker managing center through a communication line. In order to deposit luggage, a depositor (user)

U.S. Patent Application Serial No. **09/942,582**
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must have an identifier that has been preliminarily determined by a contract between a managing company of the locker and the depositor. A depositor who deposits a piece of luggage can select the type of recipient of the luggage: either a specific individual or a specific group. Thus, the depositor who deposits the luggage can designate a specific individual as the only person authorized to receive the luggage. Alternatively, the depositor who deposits the luggage can designate a group to receive the luggage, such that anybody within that group can receive the luggage.

Claim 1 sets forth “a reading means for electrically reading a depositor identifier that has been preliminarily determined by a contract between a managing company of the locker and a user of the locker; ... wherein the luggage depositing process and luggage taking-out process to and from the locker are carried out based upon only the depositor identifier.”

Claims 1-7 stand rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over USP 5,223,829 (**Watabe**) in view of USP 6,367,696 (**Inamitsu**).

Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

Watabe discloses a locker apparatus to be installed at a public place. According to this reference, a user can deposit items into the locker apparatus without having an identifier that has been preliminarily determined by a contract between a managing company of the

locker and the user. For example, when any user wants to deliver clothing to a resident, that user does not need a depositor identifier. A user who wants to put clothing in a locker presses delivery key 16a and then puts the items in the locker (col. 6, lines 8-36; col. 9, line 7; FIG. 2).

In **Watabe**, the user who puts the clothing in the locker can be an anonymous depositor with no depositor identifier preliminarily determined by a contract. Thus, according to **Watabe**, a depositor may put clothing into a locker even though that depositor does not have a depositor identifier, and therefore the depositor can perform a depositing process which is not carried out based upon only a depositor identifier.

In **Inamitsu**, a microcomputer 2 collects electronic money corresponding to prices of products purchased from a product purchaser's IC card 8 (also known as smart cards) inserted into an IC card reading apparatus 1 by each purchaser, and transfers it to a product seller's IC card. This reference does not teach that a user depositing an item into a locker must have a depositor identifier that has been preliminarily determined by a contract between a managing company of the locker and the user. This reference does not require that a depositor identifier be used by a person putting an item into a locker.

In view of the foregoing, **Watabe** and **Inamitsu**, whether taken individually or as a whole, fail to describe, teach, or suggest the following features of claim 1: "a reading means

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for electrically reading a depositor identifier that has been preliminarily determined by a contract between a managing company of the locker and a user of the locker ... , wherein the luggage depositing process and luggage taking-out process to and from the locker are carried out based upon only the depositor identifier”, in combination with the other claimed features.

In view of the foregoing, **Watabe** and **Inamitsu**, whether taken individually or as a whole, fail to describe, teach, or suggest the following features of claim 3: “wherein the luggage depositing process and luggage taking-out process to and from the locker are carried out based upon only the identifier”, in combination with the other claimed features.

Thus, Applicant respectfully submits that this rejection should be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing, claims **1-7** are in condition for allowance, which action, at an early date, is respectfully requested.

If, for any reason, it is felt that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact Applicant’s undersigned attorney at the telephone number indicated below to arrange for a telephone conference to expedite the disposition of this case.

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In the event that this paper is not timely filed, Applicant respectfully petitions for an appropriate extension of time. Please charge any fees for such an extension of time and any other fees which may be due with respect to this paper, to Deposit Account No. 01-2340.

Respectfully submitted,

ARMSTRONG, KRATZ, QUINTOS,
HANSON & BROOKS, LLP

Darren R. Crew

Darren R. Crew
Attorney for Applicant
Reg. No. 37,806

DRC/llf

Atty. Docket No. **011127**
Suite 1000
1725 K Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20006
(202) 659-2930



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Enclosures: Substitute Specification
Original Specification
Petition for Extension of Time